

Handling Emotional Behavior Situations

Behavioral problems are inevitable in classroom settings and teachers can learn a lot from them. Students will use their attitude as fuel for means of attention, and can vary from either acting up because they are lost in the classes content, or silent and reserved for the same reason. Teachers need to be able to read their students to gauge whether or not they are providing an environment that fosters student learning. Utilizing students' behavior for learning and pre-correcting when necessary can increase student morale exponentially, and help assist with overall learning. This chapter will cover topics of assessing behavioral differences in the classroom and ultimately how to provide students with opportunities to succeed in the classroom.

1. Diffusion Before a Situation: Recognizing Possible Breakouts

Teachers not only have to be proficient in their field but in the classroom as well. Learning how to gauge a classroom's climate is just another skill teachers need to master. Students will often not express their emotions physically and it is hard to determine when a problem might arise. Learning how to read students, and ultimately how to respond is crucial in keeping an environment that is conducive to learning.

One way teachers are able to maintain a level behavior in the classroom is through pre-correcting problems or diffusion of a situation. This means that teachers need to diagnose what the problem is first, determining what a students' action will be that is unacceptable. They also need to be able to [predict](#) the behavior of a student that is more likely in any given situation. The idea behind addressing a student's behavior prior to their action is considered a learning experience. The teacher can show why this action the student was going to make is unideal, and provide reasons why to avoid the reaction. This helps the student learn the severity of their actions, and still leaves the power in their hands to make or not make the action, feeling in control of the situation. The perception of control or responsibility in a student's mind allows them to feel independent, creating esteem and morale (Kauffman 62).

The precautionary measures a teacher takes in order to diffuse a situation are anticipatory and instructional. The teacher has to anticipate students behavior, recognizing their actions before they make them. A teacher needs to think into the future and visually play out all of the options in response to students behavior. This tool becomes instructional when the teacher then analyzes those outcomes and determines ways that can modify the context to the embody the optimal actions (Kauffman 63).

One way teachers can interrupt the behavior before it happens is to ask questions, evaluating the current [climate](#). Questions like "Can I identify the context in which a predictable problem occurs" and "Have I specified the expected behavior," can help teachers reflect upon the classroom environment they may have created. These type of questions and answers are general precautionary measures that help teachers mold their lessons. Questions that are more of a response to reactive behaviors or in the moment behaviors are "What is the best way I can help students rehearse expected behavior" and

“How can I prompt the behavior I want?” Part of diffusing a behavioral problem in the moment is based upon the rethinking and reflection of a previous occurrence. Questions like “How can I modify the context to make the behavior more likely to occur,” and “How can I monitor the behavior so that I have a reliable record of progress,” can address the current behavior referring to a previous instance (Kauffman 64).

Another way for [pre-correcting](#) student behavior in the classroom is through creating a positive framework for changing behavior. This helps lay out an action plan for students to help themselves and each other behave appropriately. It also “provides a common language with which to express



[students'] feelings and communicate with peers and adults.” Normalizing social learning like addressing behavioral concerns as a class can express to students the similarities between academic and personal assistance. Lastly,

determining the circumstances that trigger outbursts, staying in front of the meltdown, identifying precursor behaviors and advocating for the students success are ways that teachers can help diffuse behavioral problems in the classroom (Smallwood).

2. Handling a Child Acting Out

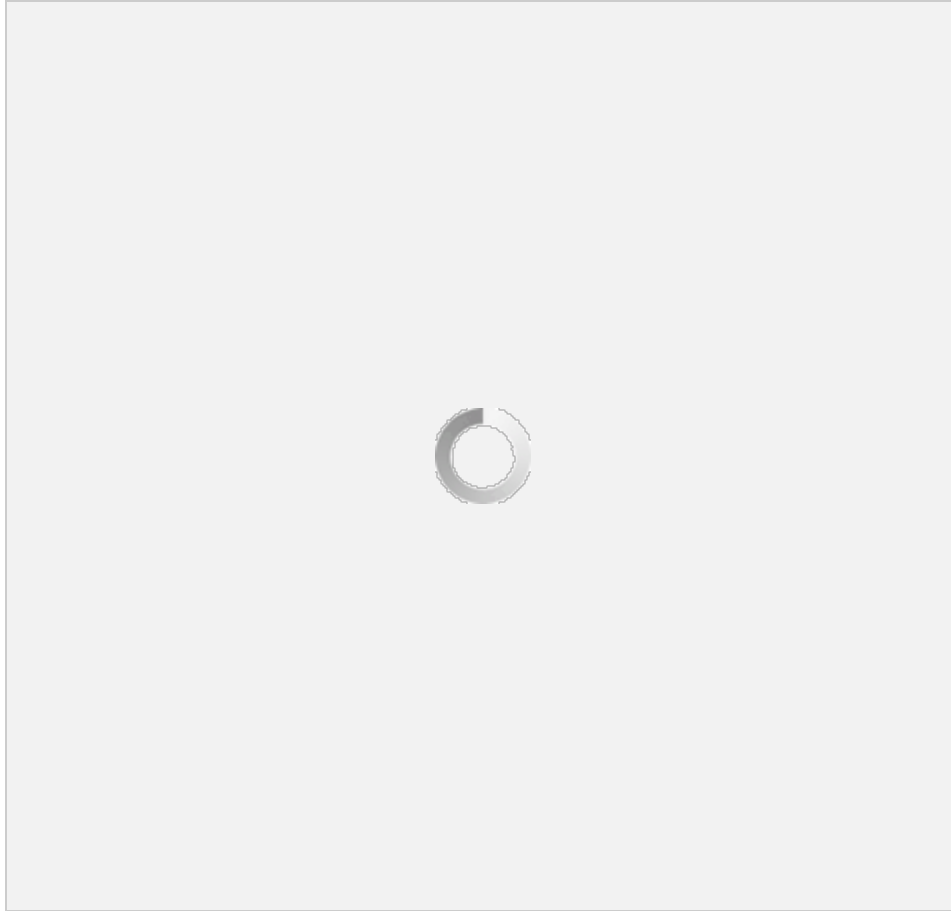
When there is a student [acting out](#) in the classroom, teachers should first assess why the student is acting out. Does it have to do with the student's peers, home life, disability, or rather the class itself, the teacher, or the school? If the conclusion is that it might be the class, the student's learning styles should be considered. All students learn differently, and if they are presented with information in such a way that they are not receptive to it, then perhaps it is an issue with the teaching. There are eight known intelligences that individuals have: verbal, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. If teachers are only accommodating for a few intelligences in the lessons then it is understandable that a student should act out when their needs are not met (Gardner).



Some

students' forms of acting out are different than others. Sometimes a student's form of acting out is a few minor distractions. Teachers should not challenge the student for every little thing they do if it is not disruptive to the class. In doing so, confrontations can be created that are unnecessary, which could also lead to controlling behaviors of the teacher (McNeely). Getting the last word is also something teachers should try and avoid. When teachers try and get the last word on students, they only prolong the argument that could have been put to rest earlier. Teachers need to be the bigger, and more mature, person in these situations and not let students get the best of them. Staying composed, cool, calm, and collected is key, and situations can end before they get out of control. It is also very important to talk with a student in private rather than in front of the class and their peers (McNeely). The last thing teachers want to do is to embarrass the student in front of their classmates. Students will lose a lot of respect for the teacher, and possibly lose their attention for much of the course.

3. Student-Student Relationships



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“Not just the teacher and the student need to respect and appreciate each other, but also the “vajra” brothers and sisters. The students need to have a good connection as well.” Teachers need to create environments that will not only be helpful for student learning, but also helpful for student relationships. Students learn better in comfortable environments and one way to improve that as a teacher is to improve student-student relationships. It is what makes a community and it’s what establishes real friendships. In a community teachers need a “bit more patience, more love, more understanding, more appreciation for each other.”

What often disturbs the balance for fostering student relationships is arrogance and ego. A loss of respect begins to emerge when students become self-centered, creating an imbalance in the classroom. Teachers should lead by example showing respect for one another expressing appreciation and gratitude. Students model these behaviors in the classroom, helping maintain that sense of community, cultivating an environment that best fits student-students relationships in the classroom (*Atiamrita*).

Friends help teens develop social skills, try new activities, and provide them with lots of support and encouragement. The best way teachers can nourish these relationships is to teach friendship skills, express concerns, create an inviting environment, do not jump to conclusions based on appearance and practicing peer pressure resistance [strategies](#) (Peer Relationships).

4. Student-Teacher Relationships

It is very important to be on good grounds with your students. Having a good relationship with a student is half the battle of getting them to be successful in your classroom. Students who feel that the teacher likes them are far more apt to participate and put forth an appropriate effort to the class. Teachers who bring confidence and a [positive attitude](#) into the classroom tend to interact with students in ways that enhance student involvement and achievement.

There are students who are difficult to get in good standing with. This creates a conflict between the teacher and student. Students who demonstrate behavioral problems in the classroom are the ones that teachers, more often than not, report as having conflict with (Hamre). These behaviors are detrimental to classroom activities and interactions between peers, thus making the teacher's job even harder. If a student's behavior is tampering with the activities in class, it could make the activities take longer, resulting in all of the agenda not being covered that day. Conflict, however, is a subjective term and varies by teachers and students alike.

Looking back to teachers bringing confidence and a positive attitude to the class, students report more self-esteem and feel more competent as learners. Students also report resisting involvement in problem behaviors as they age. It is then possible to deduce that when teachers bring self-efficacy to the classroom there is a better chance that conflict in the classroom can be avoided (Hamre).

5. Legally Handling Situations

One of the biggest challenges that face teachers today are the legal situations they deal with in the classroom. The legality can be broken down into categories of academic freedom in the classroom, accommodation of students with disabilities in the classroom and sexual harassment.

[Academic freedom](#) in the classroom refers to the presentation of material in the classroom either from a student or a teacher. Teachers are normally protected if the speech is relevant to the subject matter, however "the right to freedom of speech is not absolute if it compromises a student's right to learn in a hostile-free environment," meaning the information being presenting is isolating or limiting to a specific intelligence, race or diversity. Students have a form of freedom of speech in the classroom as well, making discussion, inquiry and expression inalienable rights. Things teachers should consider when valuing student discussion or expression is if it's at the expense of others or if it disregards qualities of respect.

The accommodation of students with disabilities in the classroom requires that educators “provide the necessary services and support for students with special needs to participate in all [classroom] activities and programs.” Teachers need to consider when composing their lesson how to be inclusive in a diverse classroom, incorporating every students’ needs. Some ways to do this is by providing a tutor, making the readings available in other forms (like Braille), giving students alternatives to assignments, allowing extensions on specific projects and providing students with preferential seating in the classroom can reduce the risk of legal concerns and improve the quality of learning in any given classroom.

Sexual harassment is “any conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic work or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment may constitute sexual harassment.” Actions like inappropriate speech, sexually graphic language, unwanted looks or gestures and unwanted touching should be avoided in the classroom and often create a hostile learning environment. Teachers should also be aware that harassment does not have to be directed at any specific individual and harmless joking is sufficient enough to create a hostile learning environment. Teachers should consider [“Impact vs. Intent”](#) based on their actions or behavior, what may be acceptable for some, can be construed as gross misconduct for others. In the end this is only a guide for some legal concerns, for more accurate answers to legal questions teachers should contact their administrator or supervisor regarding specifics (Mintz).

6. Preventative Actions in the Classroom

Many things that teachers do that are thought of as harmless can be perceived as just the opposite. Teachers should do their best to be very careful of what they say so students will not get offended. Offending a student could be a very quick segue into a conflict that could have very easily been avoided. On the other hand, students create conflict that teachers should to deal with in an appropriate and professional manor. One theory on how to prevent conflict in the classroom is the *Good Behavior Game* presented by the Center for Effective Schools (Lannie). Obviously the game can be called anything; however, the results have proved that students’ on-task behavior increased while their disruptive behavior decreased. Students are split up into groups and are responsible for things such as not bothering other students, staying on task, raising hands, etc... Each time a student disobeys one of the rules, they will receive a “tick” on the board for their team. At the end of the term, the team that has the fewest tick marks will receive a prize (Lannie). Theoretically, students will feel like they are responsible for carrying their own load with their team, and will not want to let them down. This is a great example of a proactive [preventative measure](#) because it targets the inappropriate behaviors before they happen and provides a clear and concise explanation of the consequences. The consequences do not put the teacher in a bad situation either, because the rules are very straightforward for the game.

Teachers should ensure that they are prepared for the start of every class. Ill preparedness can show students that the teacher does not have control or authority, and this can lead to student conflict. Teachers can also make note of the students who are generally the root of disruptive behavior and ask

them to do small tasks. Some of these tasks include handing out papers, writing on the board, and acting out a scenario. Many times if teachers recognize these students and recognize when a situation might arise and use proximity control to handle the issue. Using proximity control will keep the students at bay, because they know the teacher will be right there (*Classroom*).

Behavioral problems are inevitable in classroom settings and teachers can learn and develop a lot from them. There are many different strategies that teachers use to prevent disruptive behavior, deal with disruptive behavior, and correct disruptive behavior. This chapter touched on merely a few examples of each; it is important to get a good understanding of the students in the class and know their learning styles. Getting to know students and making them feel appreciated and welcome can be a huge step in the right direction for a non disruptive classroom. If teachers understand that students are still maturing they can handle situations in a way that do not escalate the problem, and come to a quick fix to avoid future issues.

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